

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS KATHMANDU 000933

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

LONDON FOR POL/RIEDEL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [PHUM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: Maoists Attack Remote University

REFERENCE: Kathmandu 925

Maoists Storm Sanskrit School

1. (U) Approximately 300 Maoist insurgents attacked a university in the remote southwestern district of Dang late on May 11, according to the Chief District Officer (CDO) for the area. The insurgents set fire to offices at Mahendra Sanskrit University, approximately 300 kilometers west of Kathmandu, destroying furniture, office equipment and books. No casualties have been reported. Press reports claim most of the attackers were women. Prior to the action, Maoists felled trees across the road in order to prevent security forces from reaching the scene.

Phone Line Down

2. (U) Because another Maoist attack had knocked out telephone service to the area earlier in the week, authorities in the district headquarters only learned of the incident May 12, and additional information was not available.

Out with the Olds

3. (SBU) Sanskrit is the hieratic language of the Hindu religion, which until recently could only be taught to the Brahmin priestly caste. Maoists have condemned traditional Sanskrit education as feudal and reactionary. In Nepal, Mahendra Sanskrit University is the only institution offering tertiary-level Sanskrit education. The school was established in 1986 and is headquartered in Dang, with twelve affiliated campuses throughout the country. On May 29, 2001, a socket bomb went off in the vice-chancellor's office at the main campus. No injuries resulted. In the past the Maoists have carried out attacks on secondary schools - and even individual teachers - for providing instruction in Sanskrit.

Maoists Continue to Pressure Schools

4. (SBU) Maoist attacks on educational institutions have increased dramatically in recent months. On May 12 Maoists torched two school buses at a private school in Chitwan district, south-central Nepal. The students were in their classrooms at the time. Last September Maoists called an "education strike" that closed down schools throughout the country. General strikes regularly shut down classes for days at a stretch.

Comment

5. (SBU) As related Reftel, the Maoist insurgency has had a detrimental effect on many aspects of the lives of children throughout Nepal. Economic indicators have begun to fall as a result of the insurgency, and human development indicators cannot be far behind. Without continued gains in education, Nepal will face grim prospects for long-term economic development. The Maoists seem unconcerned, however, and Maoists leaders have sent their children abroad, to India or the U.K., to be educated.

MALINOWSKI